

French Legation
To Republic Of Texas.
Austin, Texas.

Travis Co

HABS No. 33-C-1

HABS

TEX

227-Aust

1

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 33

Historic American Buildings Survey
Marvin Eickenroht, District Officer
San Antonio, Texas.

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

HABS
TEX.
227-Ausr
1

LEGATION DE FRANCE TO REPUBLIC OF TEXAS
AUSTIN, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS

o o o

Miss Lydia Robertson is the present owner, and she and her sister, Mrs. R. A. Smith (nee Sarah Robertson), are the present occupants.

Dr. Joseph William Robertson purchased the property from General Mosley Baker, May 10, 1848. The above mentioned Miss Lydia Robertson (born November 23, 1855) is a daughter of Dr. J. W. Robertson by his second marriage. She was born in the house known as the French Legation and has lived there all her life. When her mother died Miss Lydia Robertson inherited the house.

The French Legation was purchased by Dr. Robertson from General Mosely Baker on May 10, 1848. General Mosley Baker had acquired this place, consisting of house and land amounting to twenty one and one-half (21-1/2) acres, fronting on what is now Seventh Street and extending to Twelfth Street and from East Avenue to Navasota Street, from Bishop John Marie Odin residing in San Antonio de Bexar of Bexar County, Republic of Texas. Bishop Odin had purchased it from John Peter Isidore Alphonse Du Boise de Saligny, Charge d' Affaires of His Majesty the King of the French, for 3,600 francs. Saligny had purchased it from Anson Jones, September 15th, 1840, who had acquired it at Public Sale from the Republic of Texas, February 24th, 1840. Patent signed by Mirabeau B. Lamar, President of the Republic of Texas was issued to Saligny, April 23rd, 1841. This patent was filed for record at Austin, Texas, September 2nd, 1866, after Texas had become a state of the United States.

At some unknown date (Miss Robertson estimates the date as being around 1880) a frame addition consisting of a Dining Room, Kitchen and Porch was added to the rear of the house. This unit is twenty feet by thirty feet in size. A Bath Room opening into the northeast Bed Room was also added to the rear of the house. A Store Room was erected west of the house but not connected to it. At an unknown date the original casement windows and the shutters were removed and double hung windows and new shutters were substituted and inside

2.

screens were added. It is improbable that there was an Architect for these additions, and the name of the Builder is unknown. None of these additions are considered to have any architectural value.

The house is located on the original site. The original structure was erected between December 29th, 1840 and April 1st, 1842. No record of Architect or Builder exists.

John Peter Isidore Alphonse Du Boise de Saligny, Charge d' Affaires of his Majesty the King of France was the Ambassador for whom the Embassy was built. Saligny was very prominent in political and social affairs of the time. He entertained many prominent men of the day including Sam Houston, a President of the Republic of Texas, General Albert Sidney Johnston, and George H. Flood, Charge d' Affaires of the United States. At the time Saligny was in Texas, his brother-in-law was minister of Finance in France. Saligny almost managed for a substantial loan from France for Texas through this source; before the loan was made he became irate over some seemingly petty differences, stopped the loan, and left the Republic of Texas.

Dr. Joseph William Robertson moved to Texas in 1837 and located about fifteen miles from Austin in Bastrop County. When Travis County was created this land became part of the new County of Travis. Dr. Robertson was a member of the first congress of the Republic of Texas, and he drew up the bill creating this County. He was also the first physician in Austin.

All of the hardware and doors in the Embassy were brought from France by Saligny, and the original contract called for all the payments on the house to be made in Paris, France.

The original Kitchen for the Embassy was built detached from the house. The east end of this Kitchen was a huge stone fire place and hearth. Here all the cooking was done, and the food was carried into the house in large covered trays and served in the Hall.

3.

The Attic, which was left unfinished, was used as the servants quarters. The rafters in the Attic were of an unusual size, being three inches by four inches.

There was a step ladder stairs, in the opening under the main stairs, leading to a small wine Cellar. This Cellar was left completely unfinished and had only a dirt floor. Later the opening was floored over, and the space under the stairs used as a closet.

Author Louis C. Page, Jr.

Approved Marvin Eickewohlt

Reviewed 1936, H.C.F.

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Addendum to

French Legation to Republic of Texas

7th and San Marcos Streets

Austin

Travis County

Texas

HABS No. TX-33-C-1

HABS
TEX,
227-AUST
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

original photo. Alameda County